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Dean's Alumni Council Update

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In March 2011, Penn Vet Dean Joan C. Hendricks established a new working group for Penn Vet alumni. Fittingly called the Dean's Alumni Council, this group works closely with the Gilbert S. Kahn Dean of Veterinary Medicine and Office of Alumni Relations, Advancement and Communication on various projects to connect alumni, students and the public to the Penn Vet community for the purpose of alumni engagement and stewardship, community ambassadorship and student interactions.

Here, we've included messages from two DAC members on why they choose to be involved and what's currently underway.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

I always knew I wanted to attend Penn Vet. I remember writing to the School and receiving a brochure – I was so impressed by the veterinary school's long history and heritage.

Going into School, I had an interest in equine medicine, especially given New Bolton Center's reputation as one of the best equine facilities in the country. After graduation, however, I practiced at a small animal hospital instead and today, 11 years after graduating, I am a consulting veterinarian for Hill's Pet Nutrition.

I knew how well Penn Vet prepared me for my career in veterinary medicine and I wanted to make sure many others were able to benefit from the School and its alumni network, so several years ago I joined the VMAS Executive Board, which, in 2011, was replaced by the Dean's Alumni Council.

As a result of my involvement with the DAC, I am more aware of all the amazing work that Penn Vet accomplishes. Along with the innovative research and clinical medicine, I am really impressed with Penn Vet's involvement with the One Health Initiative to unite human and veterinary medicine. I believe this is truly the way veterinary medicine needs to work in the future to benefit society.

The DAC also provides opportunities for alumni stewardship and engagement, community ambassadorship and student involvement. In particular, I am working with several members to enhance communication with alumni via the website and social networking, and we are in the early stages of planning for an alumni survey to identify preferences for keeping in touch.

It is a rewarding experience to give back to Penn Vet and to meet other alumni who are also committed to the future of the School. I can't wait to see what the future holds for us!

—HEATHER BERST, V'00

BRIDGING THE GAP

It was half-way through last year's Penn Annual Conference in Philadelphia that we had our first meeting of the Dean's Alumni Council. There were more than 40 VMDs who were taken under the Dean's wing to help the veterinary school. It was a very congenial group who were willing to hold up placards saying "Will work for chicken dinner!"

The common bond of the DAC is the dedication of its graduates who love Penn Vet and want to serve as a bridge between the School and the nearly 5,000 VMDs around the world.

There are several DAC project groups currently addressing the following areas of interest and concern, including:

- ▶ Alumni awards program
- ▶ Class agent program
- ▶ National conference representation
- ▶ Opportunity Scholarship Program
- ▶ Speakers bureau
- ▶ Student events and interactions

Most recently, members gathered for a retreat prior to the White Coat Ceremony, a newer tradition for third-year students. The retreat included lunch with current student leadership, which demonstrated to all the value of and interest in increased student-alumni interactions. It was fittingly followed by just such an opportunity, as several DAC members handed out alumni pins to the students about to enter clinics and to officially welcome them to the alumni community and veterinary profession.

—CHARLIE KOENIG V'57